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Daily Living With Christ

G. Willard Collins

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DAILY LIVING WITH CHRIST

G. WILLARD COLLINS

Willard Collins

Presented This Book

To

Billy Dabkins May 10, 1959

30 were Baptized 4 restored

DAILY LIVING WITH CHRIST

By

G. WILLARD COLLINS

These articles appeared in the *Nashville Banner*, the afternoon newspaper in Nashville, Tennessee, from February, 1950, through February, 1951.

A newspaper is more than newsprint and ink. It is the collective personality of those who write it. That is why the *Nashville Banner* has so appreciated the privilege of having among its columnists and friends, Willard Collins, known and loved by thousands in Tennessee and the South.

We are happy to have him gather into this volume the columns which have meant so much to our readers. We are humbly proud to know that our newspaper has been one channel by which Willard's great message has gone out to the world. He who reaches for this little book will hold in his hands a treasure of truth and faith and hope based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

CHARLES MOSS,
Executive Editor,
Nashville Banner.

February 6, 1951.

The chief assets of David Lipscomb College are the men and women who compose its faculty and staff. Vice-President Willard Collins is a vital link in Lipscomb's organization. He combines many superior talents into a wide field of usefulness as an administrator, teacher, preacher, and writer of first quality.

The thousands who have read his inspiring column in the *Nashville Banner*, "Daily Living With Christ," will enthusiastically welcome the opportunity to have a collection of these moving messages in book form. With characteristic generosity the author has assigned all proceeds from the sale of this volume to the Lipscomb Expansion Program, which he has faithfully served as associate director since 1944.

Through the years Willard Collins has been a close personal friend and co-laborer of mine. This volume will mean more to me because I know that its author in his own life is "Daily Living With Christ."

ATHENS CLAY PULLIAS
President, David Lipscomb College

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PERMANENT SECURITY NOT GUARANTEED IN THIS WORLD

The material things of this world can never guarantee permanent security, according to Jesus who said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal." (Matthew 6: 19.)

Christ advised His followers against the folly of trusting in this world's possessions by describing the rich fool. This man's farm brought forth much fruit in harvest. In planning future storage of this abundant crop he forgot the poor and said, "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I store all of my fruits and my goods." (Luke 12: 18.)

This individual believed his future was secure. He said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." (Luke 12: 19.) However, Jehovah taught him how insecure he really was by trusting in material treasures and said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12: 20.)

Such is the fate of a man who thought he could guarantee his future by heaping together material possessions. He spent his entire life in this task and when he thought he had security, he discovered he had made no preparation for real peace at all. A man's soul cannot be fed upon the crops raised in a field.

STORY OF JOHN SMITH

An experience from the life of John Smith, great-grandfather of the late H. Leo Boles, illustrates this lesson given by Christ. Mr. Smith and his family moved to Hickory Flats near Huntsville, Ala., on November 7, 1814, according to the biography of Smith, written by John Augustus Williams. He had saved \$1,500 with which he hoped to buy several thousand acres of land for a cotton plantation.

One Saturday in January, 1815, John Smith rode on horseback by some of the fields and forests he hoped to purchase. His trust was in material possessions because, according to the story, he said to himself, "A few years hence a mansion will rise for me yonder in those woods. Many broad fields will whiten with the wealth of the South and troops of slaves shall gather it and lay it at my feet. Eli and Elvirah, my son and daughter, will never know the insecurity of their parents."

Yet at ten o'clock that very night, while Smith was in the home of some friends, his cabin caught fire. Early the next morning he received this message: "Your house caught fire last night and everything is lost. Two of your children were burned to death."

Immediately his friends brought his horse to him and he started toward home. Again he passed the spot where but yesterday fancy had raised him a mansion and laid out for him the beautiful gardens.

Later he arrived at the clearing where his cabin had stood. Standing amid the ashes of the house, two of his neighbors were holding a large handkerchief by the corners while another friend was placing the bones of his children in it. Smith then noticed his sobbing wife seated on a log at the edge of the clearing.

In one night he had lost two children, his house, furniture and the \$1,500. He did finally scrape among the ashes and find a small mass of silver which he sold in Huntsville for \$76.—all that was left of his life's savings. Smith, who later became a great frontier preacher of the gospel, had been taught by the school of experience that earthly possessions can slip away overnight and that such offer a false hope.

Christians find security, not in the things of this world, but in Christ. When disaster comes their souls will be fixed in the Rock of Ages. The explosion of bombs can destroy buildings and possessions, but they cannot take away God's reward for his faithful children.

WHY DO I SUFFER?

One of the most frequent questions which comes from human lips is "Why do I suffer so much?"

Peter Ainslie in his book, *God and Me*, states that "sorrow is the greatest schoolroom on earth." Jesus is described as one who knew suffering in the passage which reads "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth." (Acts 8: 32.)

MEANS OF DISCIPLINING

Sorrow is the strongest discipline in the world and it gives strength and muscle to our faith. James said, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." (James 1: 12.)

Ainslie expresses this theme in poetry:

*They tell me I must bruise
The rose's leaf
Ere I can keep and use
Its fragrance brief.*

*They tell me love must bleed,
And friendship weep,
Ere in my deepest need
I touch that deep.*

God shows His love for us in the chastening of His children. The author of Hebrews wrote, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." (Hebrews 12: 5, 6.)

EXAMPLE OF THE PINE

I recently read the story of a boy and his father who went into the mountains. They took shelter from a storm in the lee of some great, gray boulders that lay like sleeping giants close to the crest of a lonely ridge. As the two looked upward, they saw the wind lay its grim hands on a pine that towered from the summit of a ridge. Savagely the wind tore at it, shook it violently and howled around it.

To the boy this tree, strong though it was, seemed about to be torn to pieces. "Look, Father," he said, pointing upward, "what the wind is doing to that pine." The full fury of the blast just then made the pine shudder and sway.

"Storms are an old story to that tree," said the father. "A tree like that lives in a struggle from the time it is high enough to catch the first breath of air. Tennyson says a tree is 'storm-strengthened on a windy site.'" The strongest trees are always those that have weathered the greatest number of gales. Besides, the question is not what is happening to the tree but what is happening in the tree.

"The pine does not really seem to mind fighting the storm, does it?" the boy asked. "No, because it is able to withstand the strongest wind," the father answered. "It is the same with us. It really doesn't matter what happens to us but it matters a great deal what happens in us. You see, one's character is tested by everything that happens to him—he becomes either weaker or stronger. The test is not nearly so important as the result of the

test. The old pine is safe because it resisted the first storm years and years ago and it has kept on resisting. It is getting stronger all the time. Because of what has happened in it nothing bad can happen to it."

This same principle applies to a human being. E. H. Chapin states it this way: "Not armies nor navies have advanced the race; but here and there, in the course of the ages, an individual has stood up and cast his shadow over the whole world." Such human giants have been disciplined in the schoolroom of pain, sorrow and suffering.

CAPITALIZE YOUR CALAMITIES

Success or failure in life will be determined on how we face our suffering, because sorrow and misfortune are not confined to any particular group. Even the apostle Paul had to endure what he called "a thorn in the flesh." Athens Clay Pullias, in a recent discussion of this thought, said, "Great men in every walk of life have overcome obstacles. Beethoven wrote some of his incomparable music when stone deaf. Milton dictated some of the finest literature known when totally blind. Though blind and deaf, Helen Keller is among the best informed women of our time."

Misfortune can become a stepping stone to triumph. The cross of Christ, intended for a symbol of shame, has been transformed into a glorious symbol for His cause.

WE ARE SO BUSY

Let us imagine that one Monday afternoon a minister leaves his home to visit some of the families in the community where he lives. He stops first at the home of Mrs. A.

In relating the preacher's visit to this home let me tell you of Mrs. A. She is a charming and intelligent woman, the atmosphere of whose home shows the presence of a loving wife, a protecting husband, and happy children. The visitor who is welcomed into the house notices a doll placed against the cushions of the sofa. It reminds him of the little daughter, aged seven, who is in the second grade of the community school. He sees some tools and a half-built airplane in one corner of the room. These belong to the son of the family, a sturdy lad of twelve and the pride of his father.

TOO BUSY FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL

After preliminary remarks, the visiting minister asks the mother who attends church regularly why she does not bring her children

to Sunday School. She replies that she has so much to do on Sunday morning that she cannot get them ready. "The facts are," she concludes, "I am just so busy it is all I can do to get to the church services."

The preacher expresses sincere interest in the children and mentions again before he leaves that he wishes they might find it possible to attend the Bible classes.

THE SICK NEGLECTED

By this time it is 2:30 o'clock and the minister drives to the home of Mr. and Mrs. B. This young couple welcomes their visitor who tells them that the members of the congregation would like for them to begin attending the services of the church.

"Too busy, too busy," the evangelist repeats to himself as he goes along the highway to make his third call of the afternoon; this time to the home of Mr. C, a faithful member of the church who has been sick for five weeks.

As the preacher walks into the room, the sick man seems very happy to see him. After hearing the Scripture read and prayer, Mr. C appears to be much happier.

Touched by the sick man's reaction to his visit, the minister asks the patient's wife, as she accompanies him to the door, if very many church members have been to see the man. She tells him that only three or four have come and only six cards of cheer have been received. Since the preacher shows his surprise and disappointment over her answer, Mrs. C adds, "I understand how it is. The members are so busy they don't have time to come."

"Again the same excuse," the preacher thinks as he returns to his car.

SITUATION COULD EXIST

Although this story is purely from the imagination, could it not happen in almost any community? How many times in our lives have we said or heard someone say "we are too busy"? There are mothers today who like Mrs. A are so busy on Sunday morning they think they just cannot bring their children to Bible study. While mothers are busy, little boys of seven become young men of 18 and 25 with no knowledge of the Bible.

Think of Mrs. C whose husband was ill. How would you feel if you were sick and no one seemed to care whether you recovered or improved? Jesus said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." (Matthew 7: 12.)

While young husbands and wives are busy for themselves their physical bodies are growing older. It is sad that so many young couples think they are too busy to read and practice. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6: 33.)

The individuals who neglect the sick, children, and souls because they believe they have no time for such activities should read again the warning of Jesus when he said, "He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choked the word, and he becometh unfruitful." (Matthew 13: 22.)

THE GOSPEL OF LOVE

The gospel of Christ has great drawing power, particularly as is evidenced in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who is best known as the apostle Paul.

After Paul became submissive to Christ, he said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1: 16.) What are the attractive features in this message delivered by the Savior?

THE POWER OF LOVE

Love is one of the appealing characteristics of the doctrine of Christ. Love binds a mother to her child, a husband to his wife, and a child to its parents. Without love the oration is ineffective and the death of the martyr is unavailing. Paul taught this when he wrote, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal . . . and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Corinthians 13: 1 and 3.)

DIRECTIONS OF LOVE

Man's love should first be turned toward God. When Christ was asked which commandment was the greatest, he replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." (Mark 12: 30.)

If an individual loves God with his feeling power, thinking ability, and his physical strength, this will lead him to obey God. John said, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His com-

mandments." (1 John 5: 3.) Love is a basic motivation which causes the creature to obey his creator.

The Christian must also direct his love toward his neighbor. When He gave the second commandment Christ said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mark 12: 31.) Love for a neighbor will enable the disciple of Jesus to practice the golden rule—"And as you would that men should do to you, do ye also unto them likewise." (Luke 6: 31.) This guide of conduct for life's relationships will prevent stealing, murder, gossip, lying, and all other such sins so habitually practiced.

Love is so prevalent in the gospel of Christ that it unites brethren in the church and prompts the followers of Christ to seek and attempt to save lost souls. For example, young men from four different parts of the world conducted services at the Charlotte Avenue Church of Christ in Nashville one Sunday evening. Neil Lawrence, Hawaii, led the song service; Shegeji Kogachi, Hawaii, read the Scripture lesson; and Dieter Goebbel, Frankfurt, Germany, led the prayer. After the prayer Ralph Perry, Ontario, Canada; Fred Casmir, Frankfurt, Germany, and Hugh Tinsley, Belfast, Ireland, told of the influences of the gospel in their native lands. These young men who live thousands of miles apart have been united by Christ's message of love.

Jesus came to this world "to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1: 15.) Soldiers of the cross must have this spirit of Christ which led the disciples in Jerusalem over 1900 years ago to go "about preaching the word." (Acts 8: 4.)

EXAMPLE OF SACRIFICE

The late T. Q. Martin of McMinnville told the story of a young grammar school girl he met while he was preaching in a rural church.

One Sunday an announcement was made at the church service that on the next Sunday a special contribution would be taken to help the missionaries across the sea. This announcement impressed the young Christian and she told her father that she desired to make a contribution. The father gladly offered her some money, but she said, "No, Daddy, I want to give something that I will miss."

The child had two possessions—a pet hen and a duck. That week when the peddler came down the country road the little girl was at the front gate with her pets to meet him. She asked,

"What will you give me for my pets?" He took the fowls, weighed them, and replied, "They are worth thirty-five cents."

The child pressed these pets to her bosom for the last time and gave them to the peddler who paid her thirty-five cents. She gave the money to the church the next Sunday to help the missionaries. Love, as exemplified in the life of Christ, causes a Christian to seek the salvation of the lost, and even to give up something or to sacrifice to that end.

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

Love is so paramount in the doctrine of Christ that a Christian must love his enemies. (Matthew 5: 44.) By this method an enemy may become a friend. Paul encouraged such behavior in writing to the Roman Christians, "But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head." (Romans 12: 20.) Some day faith will be lost in sight, hope will become reality, but love, the greatest of these, will continue through eternity.

The gospel of love prompts one to obey God, treat his neighbor as himself, do good to his enemies, and to seek the salvation of the lost. Love paves the way for the brotherhood of man united under the fatherhood of God.

PLACING THE KINGDOM FIRST

Jesus stressed the importance of the kingdom of heaven by comparing it with a treasure hidden in a field and with a pearl of great price.

In describing the worth of the treasure, Christ stated that when a man found it he went and sold all that he had and bought the field. (Matthew 13: 44.) The pearl of great price was so valuable that the merchant "went and sold all that he had, and bought it."

The kingdom of God was so essential in the teaching of Christ that he said, "But seek ye first the kingdom and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6: 33.) One who seeks to live daily with Christ must put first things first. Certainly the kingdom of God must be paramount in the life of the Christian.

THE MONEY WE SPEND

The kingdom of God should be considered first in the money we spend. I heard E. R. Harper of Abilene, Texas, make the remark

that the one thing he feared most in judgment was having to give an account of how he had used the material resources and the money which had come into his possession.

Paul outlined the principle for placing the kingdom or church first in regard to our money: "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Let each man do according as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9: 6, 7.) Each person should plan his giving and each giver should practice liberality in order to enjoy a bountiful harvest.

However, the ever present question is "How much is liberal?"

EXAMPLES OF LIBERALITY

Jesus did not give the meaning of liberality in terms of a certain number of dollars and cents. Although the New Testament does not tell one definitely how much is liberal, Jesus did throw some light on the subject in the example of the poor widow.

One day Jesus sat and watched the multitude "cast money into the treasury." (Mark 12: 41.) He noticed a poor widow who came by and put in two mites, while many who were rich gave much.

Jesus called His disciples unto Him and said, "This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury." (Mark 12: 43.) Why was this widow's gift superior? It was neither greater in amount nor in the good that could be accomplished with the money. The rich gave more in material value and these larger gifts could relieve more human suffering. Yet Christ pronounced the widow's two mites a better gift than the larger offerings of the rich.

When I was a boy in Marshall County, Tennessee, I observed a family custom of eating. When my mother would invite a large number of guests for a Sunday meal, she would serve several tables. The honor guests would be seated at the first table and when they had eaten the immediate family and other relatives would eat. The children might have the privilege of eating at the third or fourth table. Finally the servants and other workers would eat at the last table.

After all had been served, my mother would take the scraps left from the abundance of food, walk to the back door and throw these remains to the pet dogs and cats.

The widow's gift was superior because she placed the Lord at the first table as an honor guest. But the rich, from their abun-

dance, treated the Lord as a household pet—they threw him the remains.

ONE WHO PUT CHRIST FIRST

In 1938, a young man in Miami, Fla., resigned his job as foreman in a \$50,000 printing plant in order to enroll as a freshman in the high school department of David Lipscomb College. He moved with his wife and child to Nashville where he had been promised a job at \$16 per week plus his tuition in school. He was determined to become a minister.

From the first Paul Hunton considered Christ as the honor guest in his life. Each week the family cashed the \$16 check, one dollar and sixty cents would be placed on a shelf in the kitchen cabinet, and this offering would remain there until Sunday when it was given to the work of the church.

With the help of friends and congregations, Hunton finished high school in 1942 and enrolled in college in 1943. Later he received the B.S. degree from the University of Tampa. He is now preaching for the Church of Christ in Columbia, S. C., and is editor of the religious journal, *The Lifeline*. In a recent letter he stated, "We are very happy in our work. God has been very good to us. We have received many more blessings than we deserve."

A Christian must consider Christ as the guest of honor in his home. Our leftovers from abundant gains will not suffice.

WHAT JESUS CAN MEAN TO YOU

Jesus Christ can mean more to an individual in daily living than any other character. Quite often I like to personally consider the question, "What does Jesus mean to me?"

The activities of everyday life have become so numerous that it is difficult to take off enough time to consider the question, "What does Jesus mean to me?" Yet our lives could be richer in content if we would let Jesus dwell in our hearts through faith.

JESUS, THE LIGHT TO YOUR PATH

Jesus can brighten your pathway in life. He said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8: 12.)

As long as a person stands in the sunlight with his back to the sun, his shadow will be in front of him. Every time he takes a step, the shadow takes a corresponding step. Just as long as the individual's back is to the sun, the shadow is in his pathway. The

shadow can be removed from the pathway only when the person faces the sun. The path of life is always filled with sunlight when the traveler faces the sun.

Jesus is the best answer to trouble, sorrow and death because Jesus is the Son of Righteousness. When trouble and sorrow have shaded your pathway, remember to turn your face toward Christ and your shadow will get behind you. Paul taught this lesson when he wrote "And we know to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8: 28.)

It is impossible to live in this world without experiencing sorrow, trouble and disappointments. However, the one who is following Christ day by day is better prepared to face such experiences because Christ is a source of strength and light for a troubled soul.

JESUS, THE SAVIOR OF YOUR SOUL

Man is a living soul by creation of God. H. Leo Boles, a former president of David Lipscomb College who trained over 1,500 young men to preach Christ, stressed this fact to his students. Man is not a physical body—man is a soul and he has a body as a temporary house. Moses wrote, "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2: 7.)

Jesus can be the savior of your soul. Joseph, the husband of Mary, was told by the angel, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shall call his name Jesus: for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1: 21.)

The invitation of Christ teaches that Jesus is willing and able to save. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11: 28.) However, Christ becomes your savior only when you accept Him—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3: 20.) The willingness and ability of Christ to save do not make him your savior. Each individual must make the choice. Therefore, Christ can be your savior if you so desire.

Jesus and Solomon stressed the value of the soul of man. Solomon taught that man could never get rid of his soul—"The dust returneth to the earth as it was and the spirit returneth to God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12: 7.) When man dies the body returns to the earth but the spirit or soul returns to God at the proper time. Man should not overlook the spiritual side of his

life. One may trade in real estate and cars but one can never trade or sell his soul. Man must live with himself here and in eternity. Since this is true, each person should seek the guidance of Christ in his daily life.

Jesus taught the value of the soul in two comparisons. According to Christ, the world with all its skyscrapers, farms, oil fields and resources cannot measure up in worth to the value of one individual. (Matthew 16: 26.) The physical body is important but Christ placed more importance upon the soul for He said, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10: 28.)

Life is made up of hours, days, months and years. As you experience these different time intervals, take Christ with you as your daily companion. Christ can be the light to your pathway and the savior of your soul. Man as a living soul is of too much value to be enslaved by Communism or the totalitarian state. The human being is of too much worth to spend his life as a servant of sin.

ENDLESS LOVE OF MOTHER

Intense suffering did not cause Jesus to forget the welfare of His mother, because from the cross He said to one of His apostles, "Behold, thy mother."

John, in describing the scene where Jesus asked him to take care of Mary, said, "When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto his mother, woman behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, behold, thy mother! and from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home." (John 19: 26, 27.)

A MOTHER AND SON

Motherhood deserves a high place in one's scheme of values. Ira A. Douthitt in his book *The Ideal Home* tells the story of a woman in a western state who remained loyal to her son after he was convicted of murder. One day she picked up the paper and saw her boy's picture with the story of a serious crime he had committed.

Because of a lack of money she could not attend the trial which was being held in a distant state, but day by day she read every word of the newspaper account. During the testimony the accused

man defied the court and cursed the judge. Finally the boy received the death sentence. The mother read of the place where he would be taken for electrocution. She knew that he must change trains at a certain railroad junction on his way to the prison where he must die. She secured enough money for the trip to that place and on the day her son stepped from the coach at the station she was there to meet him. When the young man saw his mother he exclaimed, "Mother, what are you doing here?"

The white haired lady said, "Son, I read all about the trial in the papers. I could not believe you had committed the crime until you confessed it." Then she told her boy how she had recently relived her days with him when he was a child—how she remembered the first step he ever took, the first day he went to school, and the first time he left home to spend the night. Then she said, "It seems now that there is not a sympathetic heart with you on earth. In spite of the fact that you have killed the girl you married, I had to come and see you for this last time and to tell you that you are my boy and your mother still loves you."

Rudyard Kipling described well the love of a faithful mother when he wrote "If I were hanged on the highest hill, Mother o' mine, Mother o' mine, I know whose love would follow me still, Mother o' mine, O Mother o' mine."

IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING

Christ recognized the value of training given to children by their mothers. Paul, one of His apostles, wrote "I desire therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling." (1 Timothy 5: 14.)

In describing woman's work Paul wrote to Titus that the aged women should "train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sober-minded, chaste, workers at home, kind, in subjection to their own husbands." (Titus 2: 45.)

A young lady may type but the typewritten page will fade; and she may make shoes but the shoes will wear out, but when the young woman marries and becomes a mother she shapes a treasure not just for this world but for the existence to come.

I have admired the beautiful Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C., on several occasions. It is marvelous that human hands could carve such a resemblance, but there is a log cabin in Kentucky where the real Lincoln was born. A mother began shaping a character in the log cabin that finally became a great president. Thus we admire the woman who helped carve the real Lincoln

more than the person who chiseled and polished the imitation now displayed in the nation's capital.

Architects of enormous skyscrapers and engineers of great bridges are justly esteemed but may we never forget the nation's mothers who are God's builders of men.

MESSAGE OF APPRECIATION

A true mother deserves tokens and messages of appreciation from her children. Sons and daughters whose mothers are still living could use a few minutes well by writing to them the second verse of Clyde Hager's "That Wonderful Mother of Mine," which states:

*I pray every night to our Father above
For that wonderful mother of mine.
I ask Him to keep her as long as He can,
That wonderful mother of mine.
There are treasures on earth that make life seem worthwhile,
But there is none that can compare
With my dear mother's smile.*

HOPE OF IMMORTALITY

Job asked a question which has disturbed mankind for centuries when he wrote, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14: 14.)

Some have discussed immortality in terms of the continuance of the race and the endurance of mental and moral qualities. Others have discussed this subject as it might relate to influence and memory, but Job has asked about the hope of the individual to live beyond the grave.

BASIS OF HOPE

Solomon and Christ gave us a basis of hope after death. The death of the body does not mean the death of the soul, according to Solomon, because he said, "And the dust returneth to earth as it was, and the spirit (soul) returneth unto God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12: 7.)

The good and the evil will be raised at the same time, for Christ taught, "The hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and come forth." (John 5: 28, 29.)

The resurrection of Christ, over nineteen hundred years ago, guarantees life beyond the grave for man. If Jesus is still in the grave, all hope is gone and we are as helpless as if He had never come.

THE RESURRECTION GOSPEL

The message, delivered by Christ and his apostles, stated that Christ was raised from the tomb. Jesse R. Kellems, in his book, *The Resurrection Gospel*, states that "there are three facts accomplished by the death of Jesus, and the events that followed it, which are admitted by both the friends and the enemies of Christianity."

The first admitted facts are that Jesus died upon a cross; that his body was buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea; that a great stone was rolled before the door of the grave and the seal of the Roman governor affixed, and that a guard was stationed about it to see that no one molested it.

Next, it is certain that sometime before the third morning after the burial the body disappeared.

Third, the disciples came to believe with unshakable confidence that their beloved master had been raised from the dead.

I heard I. A. Douthitt of Chattanooga preach on "The Resurrection of Christ" in 1943. In this sermon he said, "Without the resurrection death would be an eternal sleep, the grave would become an everlasting prison house, and life would be lowered to the level of the beast whose life ends in death."

A few days after Christ was raised, Peter preached the resurrection message in Jerusalem, where the event took place, and three thousand persons believed it. It was the principal theme in the preaching of the apostles. Stephen, Paul and James gladly gave their lives because of their great hope in the resurrection of Christ. Douthitt stated in his sermon that "every blade of grass, stalk of grain, every flower that blooms—all are declarations of the resurrection."

PICTURE GIVEN BY PAUL

Since the resurrection of Christ guarantees our resurrection, a logical question is, "How are the dead raised?" Paul answered the question for the Corinthians by declaring that the body buried will not be the body raised. The earthly body is sown in corruption, dishonor and weakness, but the new body will be raised in incorruption, glory and power. It is sown a mortal body, but will be raised a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15: 34-44.)

Faith in the immortality of the soul affords a Christian the hope of reunion. Paul gave a brief description of such a meeting when he wrote, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are left, shall

together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17.)

THE STORY OF A FRIEND

Harold Hays and I were boyhood pals. We played together, hunted, and attended school together for years in Lewisburg, Tennessee. Both of us went to Sunday school and church regularly, but after graduation from high school in 1934, we were separated.

During the period of World War II, Harold became a pilot. One afternoon in North Carolina his plane crashed and he was killed. His body was returned to the cemetery on his grandfather's farm near Lewisburg for burial. When I visited Harold's grave, I saw the woods where we hunted, the fields where we used to play, and the pathways we had known so well. As I read the marker on the grave, I knew that we could never do these things again.

However, if my childhood friend continued faithfully in Christ until his death and if I will strive faithfully until my life is over, I have the hope of renunon. I do not know too much about it and I will leave details in the hands of God.

This is the hope that spurs a Christian on when he buries his faithful loved one. The resurrection of Christ declares that man shall live again. Fear of the atom and hydrogen bombs cannot destroy this hope.

JESUS AND THE CROSS

The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross has drawn men closer to God for over 1900 years.

Before Christ was crucified he was treated shamefully. The Savior was scourged by his enemies, stripped and mocked by the soldiers. The opponents spit upon him and then they led him away to crucify him. In describing the crucifixion Matthew states, "And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots, and they sat and watched him there." (Matthew 27: 35, 36.) After hours of suffering Jesus died on the cross at Golgotha.

THE CROSS—A SYMBOL

The cross symbolizes the great truths of Christianity. First of all this symbol suggests the depths of sin. The marks of sin may be seen in broken homes, class hatred, and in men's disregard for the rights of each other, but the crucifixion is the supreme effort of God to picture sin to man in its true light.

Sin was responsible for the death of the son of God. Here evil can be seen at its worst. I heard the late H. Leo Boles preach at Old Hickory in 1943 on the subject "Sins That Crucified Jesus." He began with the sin of ignorance and then listed the sins of hatred of good, envy, prejudice, lying, love of money, and moral weakness. In commenting on the sin of moral weakness, Boles said, "Pilate was too weak to do that which he knew he should do. He could have acted firmly, but he sacrificed his principles of honor and acted as a moral coward."

THE BREADTH OF MERCY

The cross of Christ is a sign of God's bountiful mercy. The power of the blood Jesus shed on the cross is available to all. Justice demands that evil be punished, but through Christ's death God extends mercy to men in sin. Instead of the sinner receiving punishment he can receive forgiveness.

The late W. L. Oliphant of Dallas, Texas, told a story handed down from the Medes and Persians. The laws of the Medes and Persians were unalterable and their penalties inescapable. An eye was demanded for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. A young man had put out the eyes of one of his fellows, and the law demanded that as punishment for his crime the young man must have his eyes plucked out.

The criminal was brought before the judge for trial. In this case the judge happened to be the culprit's own father. The contradicting cries of justice and mercy rang in the father's ears. He loved his son but he also respected the law. The guilty must be punished but love must find a way to show mercy.

After much reflection the judge said to his son, "As your judge I must assess the penalty of the law which demands that two eyes be given for the two you have destroyed. I cannot do less than meet the law's demand. But as your father I offer one of my eyes to help meet the requirements of justice." Paul taught this lesson of mercy when he wrote, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5: 8.) The cross declares God's mercy and love for man.

POWER OF SALVATION

The cross symbolizes the power of man's salvation. Paul said, "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1: 18.) Man becomes reconciled to God through Christ who died on the cross.

There is the story of a divorced husband and wife who stood on either side of the bed of their dying child. With one hand, the child grasped the hand of the father; with the other hand, it held firmly to its mother. While the child was in this position, life passed from the little body and the spirit returned to God who gave it. Drawn together by this object of mutual love, pulled closer and connected by two tiny hands, this husband and wife were reunited and a once broken home was restored.

At Golgotha the son of God reached into heaven with one pierced hand and took hold of God. With the other hand he reached to earth to touch the heart of man. The Christ of the cross seeks to reconcile man to God.

The beams upon which our Savior died were more than pieces of wood. The next time you sing "The Old Rugged Cross" consider God's mercy and love as pictured in the greatest sacrifice of the ages. John summed it up when he wrote, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3: 16.)

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

The Bible declares the existence of God in its first verse, which states, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1: 1.)

The human mind cannot fully comprehend the meaning of God. The best picture man has of the Creator is in the person of his son, Jesus Christ, who said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the father." (John 14: 9.)

GOD SEES IN SECRET

The Almighty is able to see in secret, according to Christ. In describing an acceptable manner of prayer, the Lord told the disciples to "enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy father who is in secret, and the father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee." (Matthew 6: 6.)

David recognized the omnipresence of God because he wrote: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; even there shalt thy hand lead me." (Psalms 139: 8-10.)

There is the story of the father who took his little son with him to steal some corn. As the man prepared to put the corn in the

bag, he looked all around to see if anyone was watching. When he was sure no one saw him, he said to the boy, "Son, hold open the bag." The little boy replied, "Daddy, you didn't look in one direction." Frightened lest the boy had seen someone, the father asked, "Where? Where?" The son answered, "Daddy, you didn't look up."

The father dropped the bag and, taking the little boy by the hand, returned home without the corn.

Men may hide their sins from each other, but God sees and knows everything. There are eyes above which watch our conduct.

GOD MAKES HEAVEN POSSIBLE

In describing the judgment to come, the Lord revealed Jehovah as the one who makes heaven possible. The saved in that day of decision will receive the message, "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25: 34.)

A seventy-five year old friend of mine in Abilene, Texas, told me recently that she was just waiting to live in a happier existence. This lady has been submissive to God for fifty-six years, and she is happy because of her hope in the future. Heaven seems nearer to her now than it did fifty years ago.

I read the story of a ship which was being tossed about by the winds and waves of the sea. Passengers were frantic; that is, all but one little girl who sat calmly in her cabin. Another passenger asked her, "Why are you not frightened?" and the child replied, "Because my daddy is captain of the ship."

Christ, the captain, can lead man to heaven, the existence made possible by God for his children.

GOD THE FATHER

Jesus and Paul referred to God as the Father. There are one hundred sixty-one instances recorded in the New Testament in which Christ referred to God as father. Paul wrote to the members of the church in Corinth, "Yet to us there is one God, the father, of whom are all things." (1 Corinthians 8: 6.)

The late W. L. Oliphant of Dallas, Texas, told a story of a young father who lost his wife in death. He was left to be both mother and father to a little girl.

After the funeral the father and young daughter returned home. That night he took his baby girl to her room and tucked her in bed, turned out the light, and requested that she go to sleep. Through her tears she said, "Daddy, it is so dark. I am afraid. I can't go to sleep."

The child continued to cry until late in the night. Finally, in an effort to be brave, she asked, "Daddy, will you stay with me all through the night?" "Yes, dear," replied the heartbroken father, "I will stay with you." "All right, Daddy," said the little one. "It's so dark I can't see you, but I know you are here in the room and will stay with me because you are my father and because you promised not to leave me, so I can stop crying and go to sleep."

The young man kneeled beside his baby's bed and said, "Yes, God, it is dark—so dark I cannot see you, but I know you will stay with me because you are my father and because you promised not to leave me. So, I too, will stop crying and go to sleep."

The Christian can find great comfort in the realization that the God of the universe is his father and that he can talk to such a God in prayer.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

There are ten instances in which the Bible mentions Christ's praying or records a prayer which he uttered. Jesus taught a lesson about prayer in nine other passages of the New Testament.

After reviewing these prayers, I am more convinced that the individual who would be Christlike must be a person who prays often and regularly.

UNDERSTANDING OF PRAYER

Man is dependent upon Christ for a real understanding of prayer. As I listened recently to a speech by James O. Baird of Nashville, I was impressed by these statements: "All that the New Testament says about prayer is centered in Jesus Christ. It is Christ who makes known most clearly the God to whom we pray. It is He who established the principles upon which prayer is based."

What are some of these principles which were given by Christ?

An acceptable prayer is one which is backed by action. Jesus stressed this when he said, "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7: 7.) A Christian from northeast India has been in correspondence with Glenn Wallace of Abilene, Texas. In his talk Baird quoted from one of the letters received by Wallace, "We believe in prayer, but believe that it is wrong to pray and sit tight." God will not do for you that which you can do for yourself.

Daniel and Christ taught by their examples that God was able to answer supplications. After Darius had signed the edict that whosoever should ask a petition of any god or man, save the king, should be cast into the den of lions, Daniel, as was his custom, opened his windows toward Jerusalem, knelt three times a day and prayed to God.

Christ suffered in Gethsemane before his crucifixion. During this period of sorrow he said to God in prayer, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matthew 26: 39.)

Prayer is based upon the fact that God is able to hear man and to do something about man's petitions. Prayer is distinguished from both revelation and preaching. Revelation is the means whereby God speaks to man. Preaching is an avenue by which man speaks to man about God. Men turn to God when they realize their inability to save themselves.

IMPROPER MOTIVATIONS

Improper motives may keep prayer from being well pleasing to God. Jesus taught his disciples, "And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corner of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have received their reward." (Matthew 6: 5.) When an individual prays just to be heard of men, he receives his reward here when men hear him.

A friend of mine told me of this experience as a young preacher. A short time after he had moved to a small Southern town for work with a congregation, he received an invitation to deliver the opening prayer for the high school commencement service. Immediately he decided this would be a good time to let the population of that area know an able minister had moved to their town.

He worked for hours on the wording of the invocation. He prepared several, memorized a few, and finally, late at night, decided upon the prayer to give. After memorizing this prayer especially well, he drove the next day to the school building—not to pray to God but to inform the audience that a well-educated minister had arrived on the scene.

The invocation was delivered. The commencement speaker pronounced it marvelous. The audience complimented the young preacher upon the wording of the prayer. He went home that afternoon very elated.

Later he read again this statement given by Christ: "When ye

pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corner of the streets, that they may be seen of men." (Matthew 6: 5.) This caused my friend to kneel before God and ask forgiveness, because he had prayed just to be heard of men.

GREATER FAITH NEEDED

Great faith produces great prayers. Jesus could pray, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23: 46), because of His great faith in His Father.

When I lived one summer in Orlando, Florida, I met a widowed mother who told me an experience of her two small daughters. The three of them lived alone following the passing of the husband and father.

In the course of time, the elder child became quite ill. Days went by without much improvement in the daughter's condition.

One day the mother noticed that the younger child, who could barely spell out a few words, was writing a note. The little girl, who did not know that the mother was watching, folded the note carefully and climbed the stairs with the message in her hand. When she arrived in the attic, she stood on top of an old trunk and placed the note firmly against the ceiling.

Later in the day the curious mother climbed to the attic and secured the note. When she opened it, she found these words written in the childish scrawl: "Dear God. My sister is sick. I love her much. Please, God, help her get well." The note was signed by the child.

When questioned about the note, the little girl told her mother, "Mummy, I knew that if I would climb up to the attic and get just as near God as I could, God would do the rest."

More acceptable prayers will ascend from our homes and congregations when more adults develop such a childlike faith in the Almighty.

GIVE THANKS TO GOD

Nine men cleansed from leprosy stand out in the gospel as examples of ingratitude. Ten lepers met Christ and cried, "Master, have mercy on us." All were cleansed but only one turned back to give thanks. Jesus asked, "Were not the ten cleansed? But where are the nine?" (Luke 17: 17.)

Webster defines ingratitude as "insensibility to kindness." Men through retaliation render evil for evil but an ungrateful person renders evil for good. The Christlike personality seeks to overcome evil with good.

EXAMPLES OF GRATITUDE

David, Daniel and Jonah are described as grateful people. When David was old, after he had served as Israel's able king, he said to God before all the assembly, "Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name . . . for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." (1 Chronicles 29: 13, 14.) David gave thanks to God because he realized that God had made his possessions possible. Whatever man enjoys comes through the kindness of God.

Daniel interpreted the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar by the help of God. Daniel was grateful to God and prayed, "I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and has now made known unto me what we desired of thee: for thou hast made known unto us the king's matter." (Daniel 2: 23.) God made Daniel great and Daniel was appreciative.

From within the stomach of the great fish a penitent Jonah gave thanks to God. In the course of the prayer he said, "But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that which I have vowed." (Jonah 2: 9.) Jonah rebelled against the Almighty and he was given another chance. He was grateful for this added opportunity.

Jesus exemplified gratefulness to God in everyday life and Paul commanded it. When Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, "He took a cup and gave thanks." (Matthew 26: 27.) Paul summed up our duty in thanksgiving by writing, "In everything give thanks: for this is the law of God in Christ Jesus to youward." (1 Thessalonians 5: 18.) The ungrateful individual cannot walk in the steps of Christ and Paul.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

What do you have for which you should be grateful to God? There are so many answers to this question that it would surprise one to list them.

Are you thankful for your eyes, hands, and legs? A young man visited a large hospital. Inside the building he noticed patients who had lost legs, others arms, and a few were blind. This young man stepped outside the building, and there in God's sunshine gave

thanks for his eyes, legs, arms, and for his very life. There are so many things like eyes, mothers, fathers, friends, and food that we just take for granted.

The citizen of America has blessings found in no other nation. Batsell Barrett Baxter traveled 20,000 miles in 18 foreign countries during the summer of 1949. After his return he gave this description of the standard of living in our homeland: "When one has reached the peak of a mountain, there is no way to go but down. So when one turns from America, it matters not whether he goes north into Canada, south in Mexico, east toward Europe, or west across the Pacific toward Asia, the living standard is always the same—down."

In describing his trip, Baxter made me appreciate our blessings even more. For example, you may value your home more highly after I tell you about Hassan Yosef, a 46-year-old guide in Egypt. Eleven children have been born to this family, but only four of them lived to be grown, because in Egypt there is a very limited knowledge of hygiene, very few doctors, and a small supply of medicine. One of the United States consular officials of Egypt told Baxter, "Of the 20,000,000 population of Egypt, only a half million really live—the rest only exist."

In Egypt several score families live on the same little hill in primitive mud brick houses with no doors, little furniture, no sanitary facilities, and without a doctor or drugstore within miles. A single little well somewhere in the center of the village furnishes water for all of the families.

Dieter Alten, a German boy attending David Lipscomb College, in describing life in Frankfurt, Germany, stated recently that a house occupied by one family in America would be occupied by two or three families in Frankfurt today. Clothes that the average American family would put back in the closet, not to be worn again, would be appreciated and readily used by the average German family.

Only in America does the average family have its own automobile, own its house, and have the house equipped with the standard conveniences of radio, bathing facilities, and hot and cold water. Most people of this world would think that the average family in America lives like the family of a king.

If any people need the admonition, "Give thanks to God," certainly we in America deserve to heed it first of all.

THE WAY OF SACRIFICE

The follower of Christ must present his body as a living sacrifice to the cause of Christianity because Paul wrote, "I beseech ye therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, unto God, which is your spiritual service." (Romans 12: 1.)

Webster defines sacrifice as the act of "giving up one thing for another." During the days described in the Old Testament it applied especially to a victim offered upon an altar, but Paul in the New Testament calls upon Christians to present their lives as living sacrifices before Christ and Jehovah. Paul illustrated the act in his own life by writing, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." (Galatians 2: 20.)

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Abraham and Hannah are outstanding examples in teaching the meaning of sacrifice. Abraham's prayers for a son were answered when he was an old man. The birth of Isaac was an occasion for rejoicing, but when this child of promise grew older, God tried Abraham's faith by telling him, "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Genesis 22: 2.) The father loved his boy, but he and Isaac began the journey toward the place of sacrifice. During the trip the son asked Abraham, "Behold, the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" The anxious father replied, "God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt-offering my son." (Genesis 22: 7, 8.)

As the Father of the Faithful stretched forth his hand and drew the knife to slay his son, an angel from God stopped him and said, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son." (Genesis 22: 12.) This man was willing to give up a child that he loved so much as a sacrifice to Jehovah.

The barren Hannah, after her marriage to Elkanah, prayed to God, "If thou wilt look upon the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thy handmaid, and wilt give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life." (1 Samuel 1: 11.)

God answered Hannah's prayer when Samuel was born. This mother tenderly cared for her son, but when he was weaned she carried him to the house of Jehovah in Shiloh and said, "For this

child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given me my petition." (1 Samuel 1:27.) She left her son at Shiloh and returned home, but once each year she visited the boy and brought him a little robe. She gave up the boy to fulfill her vow to Jehovah.

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

The supreme sacrifice of all time is described in the New Covenant. Jesus gave up heaven, lived upon the earth without a home of his own, and then was crucified between two thieves. He is the example of sacrifice.

A study of the witnesses to this sacrificial death is revealing. The late H. Leo Boles delivered a series of sermons at Old Hickory in January, 1942. During this time he discussed "Witnesses to the Crucifixion." The speaker began the list with those present by command—the centurion and soldiers—and ended with the invisible witnesses—God, the Holy Spirit, and angels.

Others assembled around the cross by chance and some came through curiosity. However, a number were present because they appreciated what Christ was doing that many might be redeemed. The beloved John was near the cross because Jesus spoke to him. The faithful mother of Christ was there with a group of sincere women. They may have been few in number, but their example inspires us now.

POWER IN SACRIFICE

God sacrificed Christ, His Lamb, upon the cross at Golgotha in the hope that through him men might be drawn to heaven. The late Hall L. Calhoun told the story of a shepherd in France who climbed a mountain one day in search of a better pasture. While the flock was grazing on the short grass in the valley, the shepherd found a better field with clearer water and longer grass.

The shepherd returned to the valley and attempted to drive the sheep up the slope to more abundant pasture, but he could not drive them. Finally, in desperation, he took one little lamb in his arms and climbed the mountain trail again. When he reached the better land he stopped, turned around and the sheep were behind him. The mother had followed her lamb and the other animals had followed the mother.

God looks upon man as he lives upon this earth and assures him that there is a better pasture in the everlasting hills. The Creator took a lamb, His Son, and sacrificed that Lamb upon the cross in the hope that man might be drawn from this earth toward heaven. When one thinks of eternal life made possible by the gift of God, surely he can say of Christ, "I'll live for Him who died for me."

WHAT WILL HEAVEN BE LIKE?

Moses described heaven as the dwelling place of God when he wrote, "Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel." (Deuteronomy 26: 15.)

There is a yearning in every heart to know what heaven will be like. This desire is well expressed in Robert Ingersoll's "Eulogy at His Brother's Grave." He and his younger brother Ralph entered into an agreement that the one who should die first would have his funeral sermon preached by the survivor.

Ralph passed away in middle age, and it was Robert who preached the funeral. The memorial service was conducted in Washington, D. C., and there the older brother told of his curiosity to know more of what was beyond the grave. Near the middle of his oration Robert Ingersoll said, "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud and the only answer is the echo of a wailing cry."

Later in this speech found in William Norwood Brigrance's book, "Classified Speech Models," the author said, "He who sleeps here, when dying, mistaking the approach of death for the return of health, whispered with his last breath, 'I am better now.' Let us believe in spite of doubts and dogmas and tears and fears that these dear words are true of all the countless dead."

THE CURTAIN LIFTED

Jesus, Paul, and John lifted the curtain beyond the grave that Bible students might have a few brief glimpses of heaven. Jesus spoke to his disciples of future mansions to be prepared for them when he wrote, "Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14: 1, 2.)

Paul gave hope to all the saved that the time would come when each would have a new body which would never decay. He wrote in his second letter to the church at Corinth, "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (2 Corinthians 5: 1.)

John described the everlasting home as a beautiful city and as a bride adorned for her husband when he said, "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, come down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21: 2.)

HEAVEN WILL BE BETTER

However, when one has thought of the most beautiful city or bride he has ever seen, he still will not be able to comprehend fully the meaning of heaven. I listened to Batsell Barrett Baxter of Nashville in 1948 as he discussed "What Lies Beyond the Grave." During the lecture he told the story of a farmer who lived in the western plains in a community consisting of a few cross roads stores, several homes, and a railroad station.

One day it was necessary for the Westerner to go to New York City. In the great city he saw the skyscrapers and rode the elevators to the top of some. While there in New York he also traveled on the subways. This visitor from the farm was amazed at what he saw.

When he returned home, his wife and children were at the station to meet him. They immediately said, "Tell us about New York." As the family rode toward the farm the father thought how he might describe the skyscrapers and subways to his children.

Later that afternoon he took his boy and girl, who had never seen a big city, behind the barn and asked, "Children, do you see that silo?" There it was—reaching twenty or twenty-five feet above the ground. As the children looked at it the man said, "In the city they have buildings like that silo, only they are much taller and in them are many floors—one on top of the other—where men and women work and live."

Next the farmer led the children to the front yard and pointed out the place where a mole had burrowed. As the three of them looked at the mole path, the father said, "In the city they have trains that travel underground like a mole."

A silo is not a skyscraper and a mole is not a subway train, but that was as close as the father could come in describing the city to his little boy and girl.

Likewise, when an individual has read the vivid Bible descriptions of heaven and later experiences the reality of a home with God, he will exclaim, "It is far more beautiful than I ever imagined."

THE FORGIVING SPIRIT OF CHRIST

The Christian seeks to reproduce Christ in his daily life. The Christlike personality is the one which manifests the attitudes and ideals of Christ.

In examining the life of Jesus, I notice that the forgiving spirit is so manifest that those of us who seek to be like Christ must exhibit this spirit in our relationships.

EXAMPLES OF FORGIVING SPIRIT

Joseph, Stephen, and Christ stand out in Bible history as examples of the forgiving spirit. Joseph was sold by his brothers into the bondage of Egypt, but he forgave these brothers and provided a home for them. After Joseph became powerful in Egypt and the ones who placed him in the pit were dependent upon him, he could have said, "Now I will get even with you." But Joseph, who had the forgiving spirit, told his kinsmen, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life." (Genesis 45: 4, 5.) The brothers later asked Joseph to forgive them of the transgression and Joseph said, "I will nourish you and your little ones." (Genesis 50: 21.)

Stephen, a faithful minister of Christ in the early church, was stoned at the conclusion of his last sermon, yet Stephen prayed for those who threw the stones. In this prayer Stephen said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." (Acts 7: 60.)

Christ is the classic example for all time of the forgiving spirit. Crucifixion is a cruel way to kill. The enemies of Christ brought him to the place called The Skull, and there they spiked his body to the cross. Jesus prayed for those who treated him so shamefully. "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23: 34.)

I have never been sold by my family, stoned for a sermon, nor crucified for righteous living. If Joseph, Stephen, and Christ could forgive so much, surely I can have the forgiving spirit in so little.

NECESSITY OF FORGIVENESS

The person who refuses to forgive violates a command of God. Paul said, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye." (Colossians 3: 13.) A command of God is not to be treated lightly.

Each individual who cleaves to the unforgiving spirit will not be forgiven by God. Christ said, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6: 15.) It is so easy for neighbors to bear grudges,

create strife and live as destructive fault finders. If God were as unwilling to forgive man as man is to forgive his fellow men, few would have hope of forgiveness.

OFFENDER AND THE OFFENDED

Christ taught both the offender and the offended to seek forgiveness. The responsibility was placed upon the offended when Christ said, "And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." (Matthew 18: 15.) The individual who is wronged should be so concerned about the salvation of the one who does the wrong that he will seek forgiveness for the offender.

The offender also has joint responsibility in seeking forgiveness. Jesus stated this principle—"If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (Matthew 5: 23, 24.)

When both the offender and the offended seek to be Christlike, the way of forgiveness is easily found.

TROUBLE CAUSED BY LITTLE THINGS

Much of the trouble between neighbors and friends can grow out of little things. The late T. Q. Martin of McMinnville, Tenn., often told a story to illustrate this point.

Two families lived in the same small town. Each family had a son. These boys were practically the same age and they became good friends and were roommates in college. However, during a summer vacation period while these boys were at home, someone remarked that one boy was smarter than the other boy. Gossipers so magnified the story that the two families became enemies. The youths returned to college, but not as roommates. Even the people of the little town were divided in loyalty to the two families.

Years went by, but the unforgiving spirit kept hatred alive. One boy became a physician and the other a lawyer. Both practiced in their home town.

One August the two men became engaged in an argument. One drew his pistol and shot the other. That one, as he fell, drew his pistol and killed the man who had shot him. Just before he died one of the boys said, "How foolish, how foolish, how foolish."

The two broken-hearted mothers continued to live in the little village. A few months went by and one of the mothers told her

husband, "I am going over to see the mother of the boy who shot our boy." The husband replied, "She will spit in your face." But the mother told the husband that she could no longer live in such a condition of strife and hatred.

The mother prepared some rose cuttings, went over to the other mother's home and said, "I am going to the cemetery to plant some rose cuttings; I want to plant one on your boy's grave, and I want you to plant one on my boy's grave. I am sorry for what I have done and said." The two mothers wept and forgave each other. They went to the cemetery and each mother planted a rose cutting upon the grave of the boy who killed her boy.

Thus even in little things one must manifest the forgiving spirit. For little unforgiven things can assume alarming proportions.

JESUS AND THE HOME

The home, built according to God's plan, affords the most complete happiness of any earthly relationship.

Jesus outlined Jehovah's foundation for the family when he said, "He who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. So that they are no more two but one flesh." (Matthew 19: 4-6.) The Almighty intends for a male and a female to become one in marriage and to live together faithfully until they are separated in death.

PLACE OF COMPANIONSHIP

God created the home as a place of companionship. After man was formed Jehovah God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Genesis 2: 18.) After the woman was created Adam declared, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2: 24.)

Nine years ago I visited a home in McMinnville where the father and mother had been companions in marriage for over fifty years. During the afternoon the man took the violin and the woman went to the organ and they played several songs together. As I watched the smiles on their faces, I knew they were happy in each other's presence.

Two years later I returned to the same home, but it had changed. In the meantime the father had died and the surviving companion told me, "Life is not the same. This is the same house

but it's different now. I miss him so much." This couple had lived according to God's idea of companionship.

BASIS OF SOCIETY

A nation is no better than its homes, for the family is the basis of society. According to God's arrangement, children are honorably born within the marriage relationship. The history of Israel recorded in the Old Testament shows that when the home decays the nation heads toward destruction. I read the story of how Henry W. Grady upon one occasion went to the capital of the United States to collect some information for a series of articles. During this visit he was taken to the capitol building, and as he gazed from side to side of the structure he remarked, "And this is the capitol of the United States."

On his way home the visitor had to spend one night in a small house with a poor family. After the evening meal the father in that home said, "Mr. Grady, before we retire each night we read the Bible and pray. We would be glad for you to join us in this service."

After Grady returned to his office he wrote: "I have been to the capital of the United States, but it is not in Washington; it is in the American home where the Christian father and mother respect and read the Bible and where children are reared by the teaching of Christ."

MEMORIES CLUSTER THERE

When an individual leaves his home and family for travel, education, or pleasure, memories of his loved ones go with him. A prodigal boy is described in the gospel according to Luke. This young man asked his father for the inheritance which was due him. He received the resources "and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance in riotous living." (Luke 15: 13.) This boy began to be in want because the way of the transgressor is hard. While in that country he thought of home and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." (Luke 15: 18.)

The memories of a good home caused the prodigal boy to return to his father. The rejoicing father received his son with open arms and exclaimed to his other boy, "This thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost and is found." (Luke 15: 32.) The parents who fill children's minds with happy memories while they live together in the home, help guarantee the future of their boys and girls.

Grace Noll Crowell described well the importance of the home when she wrote:

*So long as there are homes to which men turn at close of day;
So long as there are homes where children are—where women
stay—*

*If love and loyalty and faith be found across these sills,
A stricken nation can recover from its greatest ills.*

*So long as there are homes where fires burn, and there is bread;
So long as there are homes where lamps are lit and prayers
are said—*

*Although a people falter through the dark and nations grope—
With God himself back of these little homes, we still have hope.*

MAKING MARRIAGE SUCCESSFUL

Every young man, when he selects a young lady for his wife, should resolve, "I want to marry a girl who can help me get to heaven."

Just a few nights ago I performed the wedding ceremony for David Sharp and Blanche Gordon, two young people of East Nashville. In the course of the ceremony David and Blanche repeated the vows which stress the fact that marriage is a permanent union which should last until the death of one party to the contract.

Paul emphasized this principle by stating "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." (Romans 7: 2.)

Jesus does not require that one partner in marriage must tolerate immoral unfaithfulness in the other companion. Such immorality is the scriptural ground for divorce. Jesus taught "Whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for fornication and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." (Matthew 19: 9.)

MARRIAGE IS NATURAL

Parents who strive to train their children for a successful marriage need to stress in their teaching that it is in accordance with God's plan of life for individuals to marry. Jesus taught this lesson when He said, "Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female; and said, for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they twain shall be one flesh?" (Matthew 19: 4-5.)

I heard the story of one mother who kept her daughter from marrying because she taught her from childhood that such a union was wrong. This woman continually stressed the point to her child that when mother was old she would need her daughter to take care of her and that her daughter could not do this if she married.

Yet, in the town there was another woman who followed God's plan. When this mother's son was to be married, the first lady approached her with the idea she had always presented to her daughter. But the second lady replied, "I want my son to marry for then I will have two children to take care of me in my old age."

A love that binds a male and female together as companions is a basic requirement for a happy home. While reading the story about God's creation of the first woman, it is interesting to notice that she was not taken from Adam's head that she might rule over him, nor from his feet that he might trample upon her, but from his side that the two might be companions.

A Christian home is one where Jesus Christ is the center and all of its members seek to obey His law of self-denying love. Cowper expresses this sentiment in the following stanza:

*The kindest and the happiest pair
Will find occasion to forbear;
And something ev'ry day they live
To pity and perhaps forgive.*

This quotation from "The Pulpit" describes the wrong type of association in marriage—"If a man is a selfish and inconsiderate autocrat and treats his wife as a chattel or a convenience, or a mere adornment, or a governess for his children, or a chambermaid, or a housekeeper, or a cook; or if the wife is a self-centered individual who drags about a henpecked little husband, telling him where he is to go and just what he is to do—they live together but their home will scarcely be a haven of blessing and peace."

A successful marriage makes possible a home which can serve as a preparation ground for heaven. Home is a place of rest after a hard day's toil and so is heaven. Heaven is most meaningful to the Christian when contemplated as a home.

MAKE YOUR TONGUE A BLESSING

A Christian must practice temperance or self-control because Peter said, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance . . ." (2 Peter 1: 5, 6.)

The tongue is the most difficult part of the body to control. James wrote: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James 3: 2.)

A LITTLE MEMBER

The same New Testament writer describes the tongue as one of our little members but it can be very destructive. Avis C. Wiggins of Lewisburg tells a story of the West which illustrates the point.

Near Carrizozo, New Mexico, according to the story, where the tall native grass once grew in a fertile valley, there is an old volcanic crater. Many years ago it erupted and spread its burning lava over the countryside.

As this life-destroying river spilled over the fertile valley it annihilated every living thing in its path. The burning lava has left areas of barren soil for centuries to come.

Similarly, when men become angry and lose their tempers, the tongue becomes an instrument of destruction. Who can number the withered lives, dry the useless tears, and mend the broken hearts which have resulted from such behavior?

However, the voice is a great blessing when properly controlled. During World War II Winston Churchill perhaps changed the course of armies by his great speeches. This nation's history can be summarized in the speeches of its leaders. Jesus used His tongue to preach the great Sermon on the Mount and Paul spoke about the unknown god at Athens. The power of preaching has turned the course of thousands of lives. The words of a good mother are also hard to forget.

APPRECIATE ITS POWER

We seldom value our blessings until we are deprived of them. One day a man disabled one of his thumbs by a misplaced blow with a hammer.

"That's too bad," a friend remarked when he heard of the accident.

"No, it isn't. It's one of the best things that ever happened to me," the injured man replied. "It has taught me to appreciate that thumb. I found out by actual count the first day after the injury that there were two hundred fifty-seven things I had been using my thumb for every day of my life without giving it thought. I had never realized that it was practically indispensable to me."

Our tongues may not be appreciated until we lose the power of speech. When an individual loses his voice, even because of hoarseness, he feels helpless. One should appreciate this gift of

speech from Jehovah and use the tongue to help spread flowers and cheer for those with whom he lives and works each day.

Mrs. C. R. Ballou stresses this suggestion in her poem, "Don't Wait To Give Flowers."

*Don't wait to give your flowers,
Till some lonely soul has gone,
Give them while he's living,
Time passes swiftly on.*

*Kind words that are timely spoken,
Flowers that are given today
May heal some heart that's breaking,
Or brighten someone's way.*

*So don't wait to give your flowers,
Tomorrow may be too late,
The soul you meant to comfort,
May have passed beyond the gate.*

*Don't forget the aged whose footsteps,
Have nearly reached their goal,
A bouquet with a heart smile
Will do wonders for the soul.*

A JUVENILE JUDGE'S ADVICE

From June 1, 1939, to August 1, 1950, Judge Sam Davis Tatum of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in Nashville had tried approximately 9,500 cases involving boys and girls 17 years of age or under.

Judge Tatum's records show that of the 9500 young people involved, only 64 have been regular in attendance at Sunday school or church at the time of this misconduct. Only one of the parents involved in those cases had attended Bible classes or church services with any consistency.

CAUSES OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

From over ten years of experience on the bench, Judge Tatum lists the following six basic causes of teen-age delinquency:

1. *Lack of religious training in the home.* The records in the Nashville court, mentioned above, coincide with a statement made seven years ago by Juvenile Court Judge Phillip Gillian of Denver,

who said, "We have never had an active church boy in real trouble in the juvenile court." Then Judge Gillian gave this advice to parents: "Take—don't send—your children to church."

Mothers and fathers who take their children to church and take time to read and study the Bible in the home with them are taking major steps in the prevention of delinquency among youth.

2. *The broken home.* Over 75 per cent of the youngsters who have appeared before the Nashville judge were from broken homes. The family unit had been dissolved by death, divorce, desertion, or by one or both parents working away from the home. In the course of Judge Tatum's experience he believes that divorce, with what goes on in the home before and after the actual separation, is one of the biggest curses of present-day America.

PETTED, PAMPERED CHILDREN

3. *Petted and pampered children.* Children in many cases are allowed freedom by their parents now much earlier than in former years. Even in grammar school, according to Judge Tatum, some children think they have to drink and gamble. This is but one indication of young people gaining too much freedom in early years.

4. *Consuming of intoxicants.* When a nation's liquor bill is almost twice as large as its education bill, it is enough to make people stop and think. Statistics also show an increase in the consuming of intoxicants by women.

5. *A discordant home.* The Nashville judge describes this home as one characterized by much fussing and nagging. The father and mother are not adjusted and children sometimes flee from such a situation. This condition, of course, often leads one or both parents to immorality.

6. *Dictatorial and rigid parents.* Judge Tatum has noticed that some parents who have had children in the court take great pride in having a reputation for rigidly "laying down the law" and seemed not to know the meaning of teaching, advising, and leading their teen-age children.

THE GOSPEL PLAN

The teachings of Christ place great stress on the importance of providing a Christian environment in the training of young people. The father has been given the great responsibility of seeing that Christ has a place in the education of his children because Paul wrote, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6: 4.)

The older women, according to the gospel, must stress the importance of becoming a homemaker as they train the younger women. Paul wrote to Titus, "That they may teach the younger women . . . to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." (Titus 2: 4, 5.)

CHRIST AND THE WEDDING

The day of one's wedding should be listed among the most important events in a person's life.

Batsell Barrett Baxter of Nashville recently stressed the importance of this event by stating, "The choice of a life-partner probably has more bearing upon where one will spend eternity than any other single factor."

Since marriage is a contract between a man, a woman, and Jehovah, Christ should be a partner in this decision.

SELECTION OF A COMPANION

The selection of a life companion is the paramount consideration before the wedding. A girl should consider the following questions in choosing a husband, according to Helen Mattox Young of Lub-dock, Texas:

1. *Is he a Christian?* In a thoroughly Christian home the two people must be Christians.

2. *Is he a person of real character?* Dr. William Lyon Phelps in his book, *Marriage*, states that "The outstanding need is not more sex education but more character education."

3. *Is he a man of integrity?* The marriage vows are no more dependable than the integrity of the two people involved. Marriage is based upon mutual confidence and trust.

4. *Is he unselfish?* How happy is the home where the husband and wife unselfishly serve each other!

5. *Can he take responsibility?* The Bible condemns the man who will not fulfill his obligations to provide for his family.

6. *Does he love me?* Husbands are to love their wives, according to Paul's statement in Ephesians 5: 25. No similarity of interests or desires to please the wife's family can take the place of love.

Trine Starnes, minister of the Columbus Avenue Church of Christ, in Waco, Texas, states that when a young man picks his companion he should select a Christian and a lover of children and domestic life. It is best, according to Starnes, for the girl

to be strong and healthy and the prospective groom should be sure of his future partner's love.

In contemplating marriage, it is very important for every man to consider the question: "Will she likely become a nagging wife?" Solomon said, "It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and angry woman." (Proverbs 21: 19.)

THE DAY OF MARRIAGE

When a man and woman decide to become one in marriage, they should study God's plan for their relationship. The blueprint for the home was announced by Adam when he said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2: 24.)

It is Jehovah's plan for a male and a female to become one in marriage and for each partner to be faithful to the other until death. The home is built upon a permanent relationship and this is God's protection for the training of children. Jesus said that "whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her that is divorced to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." (Matthew 5: 32.) On the day of one's wedding it is important to realize the seriousness of the vows which end with the words "until death us do part."

Fornication can break the union, according to Christ, but this is an unpleasant way for a marriage to end, since at least one partner of the contract is guilty of immorality. (Matthew 19: 9.)

Since the comradeship of a happy home is the nearest place to heaven on earth, parents should make sure that Christ is a partner on the day of their children's weddings.

DO NOT FORGET SPIRITUAL MOBILIZATION

A nation which forgets spiritual mobilization as it prepares to meet the problems of the future will ultimately fail.

Gibbon, the famous historian, attributed the fall of the great Roman empire to five failures upon the part of the citizens of that country.

1. The rapid increase of divorce with the undermining of the sanctity of the home, which is the basis of society.
2. Higher and higher taxes.
3. The mad craze for pleasure.
4. The building of gigantic armaments when the real enemy was within; the decadence of the people.

5. The decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life and becoming impotent to guide it.

STOP AND THINK

These reasons given for the fall of the Roman empire should be sufficient to make the American people of the 20th Century stop and think. As the world is again torn by wars and rumors of war, each one should realize that the price of peace must include God's requirement: "Righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14: 34.) This is one cost any country must pay for peace.

Certain leaders in the United States feel that the citizens of this nation are not placing the proper emphasis upon spiritual mobilization now in this time of crisis. B. C. Goodpasture, editor of the *Gospel Advocate* in Nashville, wrote: "America, like ancient Greece and Rome, is following the primrose path of pleasure, luxury and vice of national ruin."

E. Clay Young, chairman of the Finance Committee, the National Reform Association states: "America is losing a terrible war. The war we are losing is one which if finally lost will destroy us as surely as if we should suffer defeat on any or all of our far-flung battlefields—the war against juvenile delinquency and paganism."

The editor of the Methodist *Christian Advocate*, Roy L. Smith, has issued a similar warning in these words: "For the first time in our national experience, a generation is arising which has no God and feels no need of one. We have never been so spiritually illiterate as a nation as at this moment and as spiritual ignoramuses we are compelled to enter the atomic age."

There are 60 million citizens in the United States, according to J. Edgar Hoover, who profess no religion and "many of these no belief in God or the Bible."

IT IS TIME TO AWAKEN

This situation can be remedied only by increasing the number of God-fearing individuals in the church, the home, and the school. Cordell Hull, the beloved elder statesman from Tennessee, outlined the course which must be taken when he said in a radio address, "Human wisdom has failed. Events have gone beyond the control of any man or group of men. But one way is left—back to God and to His word."

A few decades ago Daniel Webster warned: "If we abide in the principles taught in the Bible, we will go on prospering; but if we do not, catastrophe may suddenly overwhelm us."

An individual or nation cannot continue to live in rebellion to Jehovah's word and get by with it. God guarantees that a harvest will be reaped. A poet has written a suitable message of action for these times:

*O, America, wake from out thy slothful sleep;
Bestir thyself, thou faceth solemn day.
Gross terrors rise about, a refuge seek;
Return unto God; arise and pray.*

TODAY WILL BE YESTERDAY TOMORROW

During a recent visit in Memphis I noticed a large sign in front of a church building which read "Today Will Be Yesterday Tomorrow."

This truth should make each of us determine to live well today. However, some people ruin the present because of worry over what may happen tomorrow.

During World War II an acquaintance of mine told me that his wife was about to drive him distracted. The draft was rapidly calling men into the armed forces and his wife thought he would receive his call any day.

Every morning when he left for work she would cry and say, "I won't get to tell you good-by many more mornings because you will be gone to the Army." The next morning another day would begin in the same way.

LIVE WELL TODAY

When this man had about decided to volunteer for the Army because of this condition at home, the wife realized how miserable she was making his life. Then she said, "You may be called any day, but until that time comes I am going to live well each day so we may enjoy our associations." It so happened that this particular man was never drafted.

Jesus taught his disciples the value of living well one day at a time when he said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matthew 6: 34.) Paul continued this theme when he taught "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God." (Philippians 4: 6.)

Life comes to each individual one day at a time. A. M. Burton, president-emeritus of the Life and Casualty Insurance Company

of Nashville, described this plan of God in his book, *The Sunday Visitor*. Burton wrote: "Life does not come to us in lifetimes; it only comes a day at a time. Even tomorrow is never ours until it becomes today. Do today's duty, fight today's temptation; do not weaken or distract yourself by looking forward to things you cannot see."

John Ruskin wrote of filling each day to its brim when he penned "Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life and every setting sun be to you as its close."

A GOOD LOOK AT SELF

Since today will be yesterday tomorrow, each of us needs to take a daily look at self. Last summer while I was in Anderson, Indiana, I noticed a printed poem hanging on the wall of a home. This poem vividly teaches the need of daily inspection:

*I have to live with myself, and so
I want to be fit for myself to know
I want to be able as the days go by
Always to look myself in the eye.
I don't want to stand with the setting sun
And hate myself for the things I have done.*

*I can never hide myself from me
I see what others may never see,
I know what others may never know;
I can't hide myself, and so
Whatever happens I want to be
Self-respecting and conscience free.*

The will of God should be the standard by which we measure ourselves. Christ gave the pattern to his disciples when he said of God's will, "And he that sent me is with me; the father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." (John 8: 29.)

IMPROVE THE INDIVIDUAL

The individual is the basic unit from which all social institutions good and bad are made. The core of Jesus' teaching was concerned with the improvement of the person. The home, community, church and state can be made better to the extent that people who compose these organizations become more like Christ.

IMPORTANCE OF THE MIND

Jesus attempted to change the heart because it is the foundation of one's thinking, and thoughts lead to actions and deeds. Christ recognized this principle when He said, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." (Matthew 12: 34, 35.)

A converted heart or mind will manifest the Christian attitudes in life's relationships. Such an individual will love God and this will be reflected through obedience to the Creator. The new creature will also love his neighbor and this will be evidenced by his obedience to the golden rule which states: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." (Luke 6: 31.)

When a person loves God enough to keep His commandments, and loves his neighbor to the degree that he will treat this neighbor as he would like to be treated himself, the basic unit from which all institutions are made is being improved.

CHANGE NOTED IN LIFE

After one determines to follow the Christ he will begin to live a new life. Paul taught this lesson to the church at Rome when he wrote, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Romans 6: 17, 18.)

The United States divorce rate is evidence that this country has a marriage problem. This condition can be corrected to the extent that the individuals who marry are made better. Such training for homemakers must begin in childhood.

Juvenile delinquency is another pressing problem in our midst. The parent, teacher, minister and companion must work together in teaching children about Christ if this condition is to be remedied. Most of us need to be like the Lord in seeking to improve the individual.

INFLUENCE OF A CHILD

Since even a child can have far reaching influence, the teacher cannot realize how much good he may be doing. A boy in a Sunday school class may become the leader of his city, state or nation. A little girl in the home, taught daily by a Christian mother, may in her lifetime shape many lives for the Master.

I heard the story of a small girl who one day left her country home to attend a church service. When she arrived at the church building it was full and she could not get inside. Since she was small and no one seemed to be interested in her, she was very disappointed.

Finally she left the building, sat down in the yard, and began to cry. A stranger approaching the building noticed the child and went over to talk with her. When she told this stranger the reason for her tears, he picked her up in his arms and walked to the front door of the church building.

Since he was the minister who was scheduled to conduct the service, the overflowing audience made room and he passed through to the pulpit. He seated the small child on the platform and she listened as he preached the sermon.

Several years later this little girl became very sick and the doctor told the parents she would die. Before her death she requested her father to send for the kind preacher who had carried her into the church building. However, when the minister arrived, the child was dead.

Following the funeral service the little girl's father gave the minister an elephant bank filled with pennies. "Before my child died," the father said, "she handed me this bank and the pennies she had saved and asked me to give these to you. She wanted you to take them and build a church building large enough for any child to enter who desired to attend a service."

That evangelist stood before a wealthy congregation the next Sunday and told about the pennies. As he held the elephant bank in his hand, according to the story, over one hundred thousand dollars were given to add to the child's savings. This sum was used to erect a large church building—all because of the influence of one little girl.

If an acorn by the help of God can become a giant oak, certainly a man made in Jehovah's image can have an influence which will be a credit to the generation in which he lives.

FATHER IN THE HOME

The most precious possession any man can leave to a child is the memory of a Christian father.

The late H. Leo Boles told me the story of a father who had one son. One day this man was talking to a friend who was the founder of a school for boys. The man remarked, "I have one

boy and some money, and I intend to give my boy the very best education this world has to offer."

The head of the school for boys answered, "Yes, I know you love your boy, but you are robbing him of the most important treasure any father can leave for a son." Of course, the father was anxious to know what this might be. The teacher replied, "You are not living a Christlike life. The most important possession any father can give a child is the memory of a Christian daddy."

Later this man accepted Christ. No doubt, the conversation with his friend made him realize the importance of living as a Christian. A father may leave his son real estate, stocks, bonds and cash, but if he never shows Christ to that son in his daily life, he robs the child of the greatest gift of all.

PARENTS' OBLIGATION TO CHILDREN

Children are to honor parents. Paul wrote, "Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise." (Ephesians 6: 2.) However, the mother and father should live in such a way that their young people will have the desire to fulfill this command.

I remember a young lady who came to me at the close of a sermon one night and said, "My father has been so mean to my mother and has lived such a wayward life that it is difficult for me to love and care for him."

A mother listened attentively to a minister one Sunday as he admonished children to love, honor and obey their parents. After the service she told the speaker to deliver a lesson some Sunday to encourage fathers and mothers to live in such a way that it would be easy for children to practice what he had said that day.

THE PRODIGAL FATHER

Each child has a right to more than food, clothing and correction. Every young person needs and deserves a faithful father. Blake W. Godfrey describes the wrong type of man in his "Parable of the Prodigal Father."

In this story the author tells of one who became so busy in a "land of stocks, bonds and securities and other things which do not interest a boy" that he wasted his opportunity of being a chum to his son.

After this man had spent the very best of his life in such pursuits, he had gained money but he had failed to find satisfaction. When he came to himself he said, "How many men of my acquaint-

ance have boys whom they understand and who understand them, who talk about their boys and associate with them and seem perfectly happy in the comradeship of their sons and I perish with heart hunger. I will arise and go to my son."

After the father had confessed his neglect to the boy the young man replied, "There was a time when I wanted to know things, when I wanted companionship and counsel; but you were too busy. I received the information and I found companions, but they were the wrong kind, and now, alas, I am wrecked and there is nothing you can do for me."

INFLUENCE OF FATHER

The admiration of a child is one compensation received by a true father. Two little boys were overheard in a heated argument. After much discussion one of them concluded, "I know what I have said is right, it cannot be wrong because my daddy said it was true."

Since a son respects his faithful daddy so much, father should do his best to guide the child aright. The man has the responsibility of providing the proper environment for a child. Paul wrote, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6: 4.) The young man should keep this requirement in mind when he chooses the young woman who is to be his wife and the mother of his children. Every Christian mother deserves the support and companionship of a Christian father. Children are fortunate who have been trained by such a worthy pair.

I know a couple in Atlanta, Georgia, who have been married fifty-seven years. They have reared a large family and next Sunday this man, who is past eighty years of age, will be very happy. As usual, gifts, telegrams and special delivery letters will arrive from several states and each will be addressed to "My Wonderful Dad," for as this father's life nears its closing days these children are seeking ways to show in return their appreciation for what he has meant to them.

DECISIONS ARE FAR-REACHING

One decision can change the route a man will travel for a lifetime.

When Alvah Roebuck decided to answer an ad in the *Chicago Daily News* over fifty years ago, the foundation was laid for Sears, Roebuck and Company. Boris Emmett and John E. Jeuck tell the story of how Mr. Sears met Mr. Roebuck in *Catalogues and*

Counters, a 788-page history of Sears recently published by the University of Chicago Press.

In 1886, Richard Sears was freight and express agent at the North Redwood, Minnesota, station of the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad, according to this publication. He also began to sell watches and later moved to Minneapolis to start the R. W. Sears Watch Company. A few months later he moved this business to Chicago.

Alvah Roebuck was tinkering with watches, jewelry, and sewing machines during this period at Hammock, Indiana. One day Roebuck noticed this advertisement in the *Chicago Daily News*: "Wanted—watch maker with reference who can furnish tools; state age, experience and salary required. Address T. 39 Daily News." Roebuck answered the ad which had been placed by Sears. He was hired and thus began Sears, Roebuck and Company. This decision by a watch repairman re-routed his entire life and led to the establishment of one of the world's largest retail businesses.

POVERTY TO WEALTH

Harris J. Dark, in his tract *How Much Is Liberal?*, tells the story of a Kansas business man who lost his possessions. At one time he was \$50,000 in debt. While in his financial strain he visited a doctor one day. The physician told him, "I have a prescription which I have been using in my practice and it is good. If you would like, I will give you the formula and maybe you can manufacture it and make some money."

The businessman took the formula and went home. He turned to Genesis 28: 22 and drew a circle around the words "Of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give a tenth unto thee."

With that purpose in his heart, he began to manufacture the medicine and this man became a multi-millionaire. The formula was for mentholatum and the one who chose, like Jacob, to remember Jehovah was A. A. Hyde.

EITHER RIGHT OR WRONG

Decisions can be made either for the right or for the wrong. When Lot proposed to "pitch his tent toward Sodom" he selected the evil because "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." (Genesis 13: 12, 13.)

Later this kinsman of Abraham paid a great price for his choice. He moved into the town of Sodom and when Jehovah rained fire and brimstone upon the city, Lot lost his wife. She

became a pillar of salt. No doubt, this man lost other possessions in the destruction of the wicked place.

In contrast, Moses, Joshua and Elijah decided to walk on the Lord's side. Moses turned his back on the wealth, pleasure and fame of the Egyptian courts and suffered affliction with the people of God. (Hebrews 11: 23-29.)

When Joshua, Moses' successor, stood before his neighbors to say, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve," he cast his vote by announcing, "But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24: 15.)

Years after at Mt. Carmel, Elijah said unto the followers of a false god, "How long hath ye between two opinions. If the Lord be God follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." (1 Kings 18: 21.) This prophet of Jehovah then tried the 450 prophets of Baal and proved them false. Elijah was not afraid to stand up and be counted for the Almighty.

MUST FACE CONSEQUENCES

Each person must face the consequences of his decisions. No one can run from his record. A foolish purpose in marriage may result in a life of unhappiness. A determination to leave Christ out of your daily life can be disastrous for eternity.

If you choose to "pitch your tent toward Sodom," when the time of investigation and destruction comes you must pay the price for your choice.

Since determinations of individuals can be so far-reaching, Jesus warned, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth unto destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7: 13, 14.)

CONFIDENCE NEEDED IN THIS WORLD OF UNCERTAINTY

In this world of uncertainty each individual must remember that God still exists and that the Creator loved man to the extent that He gave Jesus for our salvation. In one of the most familiar statements of Christ He gave this assurance: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3: 16.)

YOU AND GOD

One can accomplish much in a lifetime with the help of Jehovah. Sometime ago I attended a breakfast given by Dean and Mrs. J. P. Sanders in honor of the graduating class at David Lipscomb College. As I opened the place card at my plate, I read this challenging question: "In the years to come what can you accomplish, you and God?"

Directly beneath this question each graduate could read a statement from Lyman Abbott: "I plucked an acorn and held it to my ear and this is what it said to me, 'By and by the birds will come and nest in me. By and by I will furnish shade for the cattle. By and by I will provide warmth for the home. By and by I will be shelter from the storm for those who have gone under the roof. By and by I will be the strong ribs of a great vessel, and the tempest will beat against me in vain, while I carry men across the Atlantic.'"

"O, foolish little acorn, wilt thou be all this? I asked, and the acorn answered, 'Yes, God and I.'"

If God can do so much with a little acorn, think what He can accomplish with a soul.

FAITH IN IMMORTALITY

The problems of our generation cannot destroy a Christian's faith in the immortality of man. William Jennings Bryan asked the following question many years ago: "If the deity deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the dead acorn and make it burst from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth . . . man, who was made in the image of his creator?"

Mr. Bryan continued his oration by saying, "If He stoops to give the rosebush, whose withered blossoms float upon the breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He withhold the words of hope from the children of men when the frosts of winter come?"

Paul gave us the assurance of immortality when he wrote, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (1 Corinthians 15: 53.) This is a promise from God and Jehovah will be faithful to the fulfillment of it.

CREATURES OF INSTINCT

The creatures of instinct are living examples that there is a Creator in whom we can have confidence if we will trust and obey

him. For example, during the thirty-five year period from 1912-48, the Baltimore Oriole has arrived on the Vanderbilt University campus in Nashville either on April 15 or within three days of this date with one exception, when it arrived on April 19, according to George R. Mayfield. This bird spends the winter in the Brazilian jungles along the Amazon River. Dr. Mayfield states that the distance from Nashville to the Amazon River is at least 5,000 miles as the Oriole flies. This annual journey takes him through one of the Gulf states, across the Gulf of Mexico, across the Caribbean Sea into Colombia or Venezuela. He passes across the equator and goes on into Brazil where he spends the months of December and January.

How is it possible for this bird to stay on the course as he travels such great distances and to arrive back in Nashville on time for spring? There is a Creator, Jehovah God, who made the creatures of instinct, and I am willing to place my trust in this divine power.

William Cullen Bryant expresses this faith in his poem, "To A Waterfowl":

*He, who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.*

GOD IS MY PARTNER—A. M. BURTON

In August 1897, a boy left Second Creek, in Trousdale County, Tennessee, and moved to Nashville, where he secured employment at one dollar per day.

Six years later this young man organized and started the Life and Casualty Insurance Company. In February 1950, after serving as its president for 47 years, he retired from that corporation which now has assets of over \$118,000,000.00.

USED BIBLE PRINCIPLES

A. M. Burton, the boy from Second Creek, believes that God has been his partner through life and he is thankful for such companionship. During a recent visit in his office, this Nashville business leader told me, "The Bible principles which I have used in the business have been more responsible for its success than

any other one factor. I believe that I have read the Bible more in my life than all other books put together."

This insurance executive believes in prayer. He realizes that man is weak and he, therefore, prays daily to God: "I am weak and faulty and I ask Thee to overrule me this day for my spiritual good. Help me to use my every talent and wealth to further Thy cause and the cause of humanity." Each evening this servant of Christ has the feeling and satisfaction that this prayer has been answered.

Mr. Burton has definite scriptural convictions which he has used as guideposts during his successful career. He believes that it takes faith in business as well as in religion if one is to succeed. For example, this individual who planned a great insurance company tells his friends that if he had sat down when he was laying the plans for the corporation and thought about all the things which could have happened to keep the business from succeeding, he would never have started it. However, he had the conviction that the obstacles could be overcome and his faith conquered fear. The giant corporation stands today as a monument to his optimism and faith. Many fail in life because they never have the faith and courage to carry out their dreams and plans.

A second basic principle which has guided this leader is that "Right will Triumph." I can hear him emphasize this statement now in my memory: "If doing right won't win, I don't want to be a success." One of his favorite scriptures is: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8.)

There are two other beliefs which have strengthened this child of God for many years. The first is that life is a sowing and a reaping—spiritually, financially, physically and mentally. Mr. Burton is convinced that if one sows success in these four relationships he will reap success, and that if he sows the seeds of failure he will harvest the same. Paul taught him this lesson because he wrote: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Galatians 6:7.)

The other principle is that God will reward and bless the cheerful giver. However, this man, who has given to so many and has been prospered in return, warns, "If one gives with a selfish motive in mind, he will not be blessed. However, if a person gives to do

good and to help serve God and his fellowman, the gift will come back many fold."

PRESENT WORLD CRISIS

A. M. Burton believes that the Lord who has guided him so far will also overrule in the present world crisis. He states that whenever the present world conflict is over, whatever is best for Christ and His kingdom will prevail. No doubt, this Bible student is right when he says, "The atomic bomb has brought many people to their knees in prayer who otherwise might never have prayed."

